

Early Intervention 0-3

All children grow and develop at their own pace. However, sometimes children have special developmental needs or health concerns that may put them at risk for, or cause, a developmental delay. Early intervention services under Part C of IDEA are available to help families who have concerns about the development of their young child (birth to three).

Early intervention is the process of anticipating, identifying and responding to concerns about a baby's or toddler's development in order to minimize potential adverse effects and maximize healthy development. Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides the legislative and regulatory authority for states to carry out this process.

Early intervention includes evaluation of a child's strengths and needs and an assessment of the family's priorities for their child's development, family resources, and the child's current level of participation and learning opportunities within typical family life. Early intervention also includes service coordination; individualized learning experiences; family support from specialized service providers such as developmental, physical, occupational and/or speech and language therapists; home visits and parent training/coaching; and transition supports to facilitate a smooth change from early intervention to preschool or other appropriate programs. These services may be provided in homes, childcare centers, Early Head Start programs or other early childhood settings.



First Connections

In Arkansas, Part C early intervention is under the direction of the Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services Part C Program, First Connections (FC). FC is a federally funded program for families whose child is under the age of three and has a developmental delay or disability. Early intervention may begin at any time between birth and age three; however, when early intervention is needed, the earlier it is provided, the better the outcome for the child and family.

First Connection's goal is to strengthen the capacity of families to meet the developmental and health-related needs of their infant or toddler. FC ensures that families receive supports and services that are:

- Family-centered
- Based on relationships
- Focused on the strengths of the child and family
- Provided in natural environments (where the child lives, learns and plays)
- Provided in partnership with the child's caregivers

Early intervention seeks to build functional, foundational skills to help infants/toddlers with a developmental delay or disability to be full, active participants in home and community life. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has established the following outcomes (or goals) for early intervention under Part C:

- ✓ Children have positive social relationships
- ✓ Children acquire and use knowledge and skills
- ✓ Children take appropriate action to meet their needs

FC contracts with licensed/certified agencies throughout the state to provide intervention supports and services necessary to meet the child's functional goals on the child's and family's plan.

Early intervention supports and services are funded through the family's health insurance and/or Medicaid. Services are provided at no cost to the family.

Early Intervention
Under Part C of
IDEA

First Connections



Program Overview